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## Suffering - Unexpected "Unhurrying"

This week we will talk about how suffering often provides opportunities for unhurry and rest. Life has a way of causing us to slow down or stop due to difficult trials or pain that we face.

John 16:33 (NIV) "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

We will suffer. Suffering comes in many forms: Physical, relational, financial, emotional etc....

### Different causes of suffering

1. Our own sinful, foolish decisions can bring suffering.

Proverbs 13:20 (NIV) Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Proverbs 6:32 (NIV) But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself.

2. Others who sin against us, bring suffering. The devil doesn't play fair! The story of Joseph Gen. 37-50

Genesis 37:23 (NIV) So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

3. The effects of sin cause a world full of suffering.

Genesis 3:17-19 - The earth is cursed because of sin

- We live in a fallen world where some things are explainable and others are not. Many things are completely out of our control. (natural disasters)

4. God allows suffering to get our attention, slow us down and make us more like Him!

Psalms 119:67 (NIV) Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

- Sometimes earthly tragedies lead us to repentance and new priorities in life.

### How we respond to suffering matters.

- 'I must try harder.' 'If I do good then good things will happen to me.'
- 'Life is random, stuff happens. Nobody's in charge. There is no God or He is not good.'
- 'Life is one big downer. Hope for nothing, Just endure it.'

But the *gospel* can set our hearts at ease: God, through Christ, has reached into our painful world, suffered with us, and offers hope, purpose and a future.

Romans 8:18 (NIV) I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

- Slow down, stop and seek the Lord. Be unhurried

Psalms 46:10 (NIV) He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;"

- Embrace suffering without having all the answers. The story of Job.
- Empathize with the hurting, comfort, weep with those who weep.
- Don't make assumptions nor give pat answers, like Job's friends.

Job 1:21 (NIV) “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”

- Job keeps his eyes on God in the face of very difficult circumstances.
- Joseph’s long journey of suffering led him into deeper relationship with God.

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Let’s remember when we are in Christ, death, the ultimate suffering, does not have the final word.

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV) For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

### **How to be unhurried in suffering**

Don’t try to rush through tragedy or pain.

- God loves us enough to slow us down in the midst of suffering so we can be still, rest, pray and find His perspective.
- Stop, don’t race or run, instead, reflect on your standing with God. Remember that you have peace with Him, and access to Him and His grace.
- Let your circumstances develop in you perseverance, character and hope in Christ.

Romans 5:3-5 (NIV) Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

- Being unhurried gives us time to surrender our circumstances to God, placing our *trust and reliance on Him*.

2 Cor 1:8-10 (NIV) 8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

- Being unhurried in suffering, provides time to focus on our *future hope and glory*.

Hebrews 11:13-16 (NIV) All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

### **Application:**

1. How are you presently responding to your current circumstances? Where is your focus?
2. Through your suffering, in what ways might God be trying to get your attention?
3. In what ways may God be using your circumstances to invite you into a more faithful relationship with Him?